

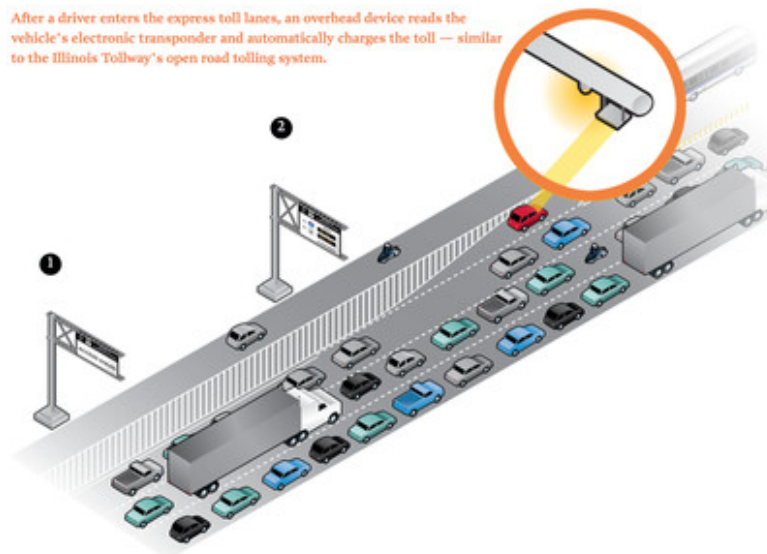
Is congestion pricing the key to solving Chicago's traffic woes?

 chicago.curbed.com/2017/10/26/16549842/transportation-traffic-congestion-pricing

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With highway gridlock costing Chicago \$7.3 billion a year in lost productivity and fuel, it's no surprise planners are exploring new ways to address the issue. A joint effort from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Illinois Tollway hopes to change things with the adoption of so-called congestion pricing. The idea even earned the support of the Chicago Tribune Editorial Board this week.



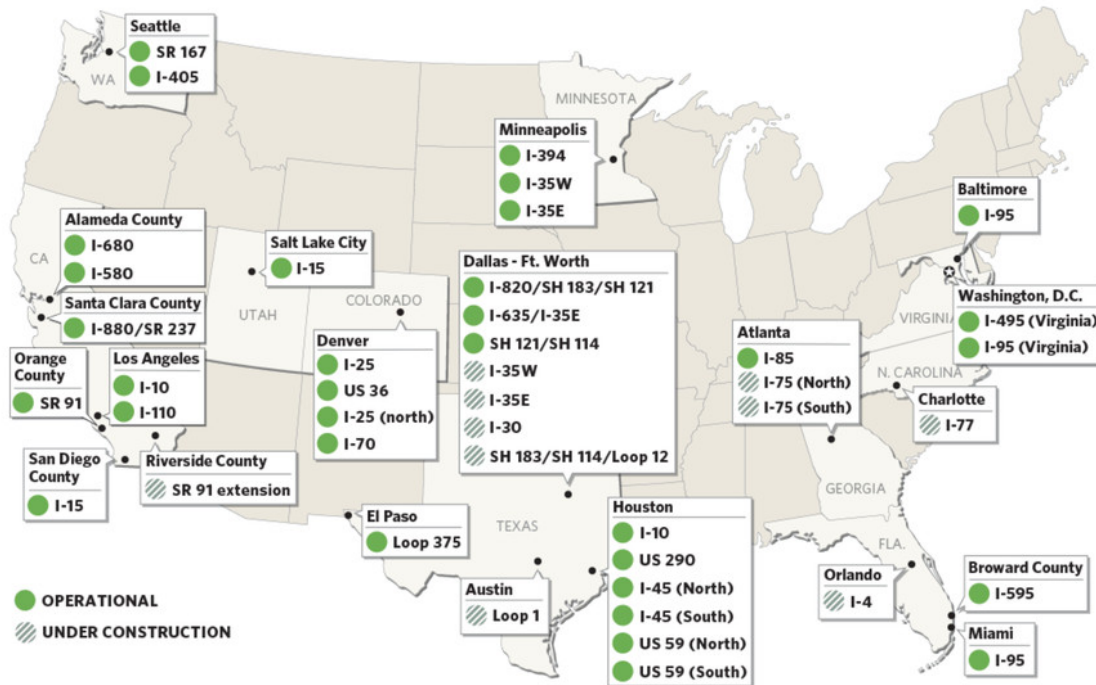
An illustration showing how congestion tolling lanes could work for Chicago's expressways.
CMAA

Congestion taxes are successfully used in a number of cities to dissuade people from driving into crowded areas at peak times, but Chicago's solution would also utilize dedicated express toll lanes that would charge drivers on adjustable scale based on current demand and overall distance travelled.

The system would provide drivers more choices by only charging motorists who opt to use the special congestion-priced lanes to bypass traffic choke points. Transit vehicles such as buses as well as registered carpools could access these lanes for free or at reduced toll rates.

Revenue generated by the tolls would channel back into new transportation projects. Illinois' current 19-cent gas tax, which hasn't been raised since 1991, doesn't pull enough money to fund needed infrastructure improvements, argues the Tribune Editorial Board. Future revenue

is only expected to drop as cars become more fuel efficient.



A map showing where congestion pricing has been adopted or proposed. An [interactive version](#) provides additional information on each instance.

CMAP

According to CMAP's research, building a single congestion-priced lane can shorten a morning rush-hour commute by one-third to two-thirds. Rush-hour travel times in the un-tolled lanes would drop too—potentially by a quarter or a third.

While congestion pricing is a key part of CMAP's 'Go to 2040' long-term planning strategy, the system could debut in a pilot capacity relatively soon. IDOT is hoping to study the concept by implementing a [managed lane](#) on Interstate 55 by as early as 2019.

